

MINUTES
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission
Helena Headquarters
1420 East 6th Avenue - Helena, MT 59620
CONFERENCE CALL

November 7, 2003

Commission Members Present via Telephone: Chairman Dan Walker, Mike Murphy, John Brenden

Fish, Wildlife & Parks Staff Present: Director Jeff Hagener, Don Childress, Regena Peterson

Topics of Discussion:

1. Hunting District 282 Elk Season Extension

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**Chairman Dan Walker** called the Commission Conference Call meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**1. Hunting District 282 Elk Season Extension. Don Childress, FWP Wildlife Division Administrator,** asked for approval from the Commission to extend the elk hunting timeframe in Hunting District 282 by one week. District 282 is the Blackfoot Clearwater Game Range where fifty A7 licenses were typically issued in this area, but due to an increase in population, permits were increased to 100. These licenses are valid until November 10, 2003; the Department is requesting an extension to November 16, 2003. Permits have been limited in that District in order to curb intrusion on private lands, and not allow the elk to group up too early. At this point 17 elk have been harvested.

**Childress** said permit holders will be contacted to inform them of the extension in time if the Commission approves this request. **Murphy** said he concurs with the recommendation to extend the season.

**Childress** said that on average there has been at least 50-60 percent success rate, however that was when 50 permits were issued. He said these permits are also valid in HD285 so permittees have the opportunity to hunt outside the Game Range until the end of the regular season.

**Brenden** asked if there is a specific target number of elk to be harvested in HD282. **Childress** said there is no specific number, the issue is to provide opportunity for hunting on the Game Range. He said there is very little snow in the area at this time. **Brenden** asked if extending the season until November 16 is long enough, to which **Childress** replied that it is.

**Brenden** asked if the Commission has the authority to close any area. **Childress** said under emergency situations the Commission can institute a 12- hour closure, but normally it is a 24- hour closure. **Brenden** asked if declaring an emergency in this district would be a better solution. **Childress** said an extension will work fine for this specific circumstance, but suggested keeping that course of action in mind for later situations.

*Action: Walker moved and Brenden seconded the motion to approve the extension of the elk hunting season in Hunting District 282 by one week, to conclude on November 16, 2003, as recommended by the Department. Motion carried. Murphy's phone lost connection, but he had previously stated his support.*

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

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Dan Walker, Chairman

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M. Jeff Hagener, Director